

Chapter on the description of the eating of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam.

A few of the eating and table manners of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam are mentioned in this chapter. Five ahaadith are mentioned herein.

(130) Hadith Number 1.

Kaa'b bin Maalik Radiyallahu 'Anhu says: "Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam licked his fingers thrice (after eating)".

Commentary

After eating it is mustahab to lick the fingers before washing the hands. According to some authorities, due to this narration it is mustahab to lick the fingers thrice. Mulla 'Ali Qaari says three times is not meant here, but that three-fingers should be licked, as will be stated in another narration. Therefore, another narration of Sayyidina Kaa'b bin Maalik Radiyallahu 'Anhu is also mentioned in this chapter. Some commentators of the hadith say that it is a separate etiquette to lick the fingers thrice, so that it becomes completely clean, and in another narration where three fingers are mentioned, is also one of the etiquettes.

(131) Hadith Number 2.

Anas Radiyallahu 'Anhu says: "Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam used to lick his three fingers after having eaten".

Commentary

It was the noble habit of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam to eat with three fingers only. Although we find in a few narrations that he used five fingers also. In most narrations the three fingers; thumb, and middle fingers are mentioned. The benefit of eating with three fingers is that the amount taken (morsel) will be less, and one will not eat more. Imam Nawawi says: 'We gather from these ahaadith that it is mustahab to eat with three fingers'. For this reason the fourth and fifth fingers should not be used unnecessarily. But if such food is eaten, where it is difficult to use only the three fingers, then there is no harm in using more. Mulla 'Ali Qaari has written that to eat with five fingers is a sign of greediness. Many a time due to the morsel being big, it results in the stomach being unnecessarily strained, it is also the reason for food getting stuck in the throat.

(132) Hadith Number 3.

Abu Juhayfah Radiyallahu 'Anhu says: "Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam said: 'I do not lean and eat'".

Commentary

This hadith has been discussed in a previous chapter.

(133) Hadith Number 4.

Kaa'b bin Maalik Radiyallahu 'Anhu says: "It was the noble habit of Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam to use three fingers whilst eating and-he also licked them".

Commentary

It has been mentioned in some narrations that he first licked the middle finger, then the sha-haadah finger, then the thumb. It was the noble habit of the master to use these three fingers. The 'ulama have mentioned many benefits in this method (sequence). The first is that the licking of the fingers will run in a manner where it goes to the right. The Sha-haadah finger will be on the right of the middle finger. The second is that the middle finger is long, therefore it will be more contaminated. For this reason it is appropriate to begin with this finger. Khattaabi says: 'Some foolish people do not like to lick the fingers, and think it disgraceful, but they do not reason that the food that is on the finger is the same that they have been eating, there is nothing new on it'. Ibn Hajar says: 'If someone thinks of his own deed as disgraceful, it could be discussed. But to think of any act of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam as disgraceful, could be dangerous and may even lead to kufr (disbelief). -Jam'ul Wasaa-il. In reality these things have alot to do with habit. If one has a habit of something, it does not matter, and one will not even take notice of it. This is why if one naturally feels these deeds to be disgraceful, then too one should try to form a habit of it, (and should remind one's self that it is sunnah of Sayyidina Rasulallah (Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam)). Once when this humble servant went to Hejaz (Saudi Arabia), a few who had not been to India asked me surprisingly and with great astonishment, that we hear that there is a fruit in India known as the Mangoes. We hear such disgusting things about it that it surprises us. It is put to the mouth and sucked, it is removed then put to the mouth and sucked again, It is again removed looked at, and sucked again. They were describing it with such disgust that it seemed they were about to vomit. An Indian will not feel anything disgusting about it. There are many such examples. One takes a spoonful of custard and puts it into the mouth, then puts the same spoon which has some saliva on it, into the plate again, eating from it a second and third time. There are countless other instances where a person is used to a certain way and manner and does not feel the least disgusted about it.

(134) Hadith Number 5

Anas bin Maalik (Radiyahallahu anhu) says: "Dates were presented to Rasulullah (Sallahallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam). I saw him eating them. Due to hunger he was sitting on the support of something and not on his own support".

Commentary

That means he was supporting his back on a wall or something. It has been prohibited in the Ahaadith to lean on something and eat. Here it was due to weakness, therefore it cannot be said that it is contrary to the ahaadith prohibiting it, nor can it be reasoned from this hadith that it is permissible to lean and eat.